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Wednesday, 17 October 2007, 10 a.m.

New York

President:	Mr. Christian	(Ghana)
Members:	Belgium	Mr. Verbeke
	China	Mr. Liu Zhenmin
	Congo	Mr. Okio
	France	Mr. Ripert
	Indonesia	Mr. Natalegawa
	Italy	Mr. Spatafora
	Panama	Mr. Arias
	Peru	Mr. Voto-Bernales
	Qatar	Mr. Al-Nasser
	Russian Federation	Mr. Churkin
	Slovakia	Mr. Matulay
	South Africa	Mr. Kumalo
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland	Sir John Sawers
	United States of America	Ms. Wolcott

Agenda

Post-conflict peacebuilding

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its first session (S/2007/458)

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07-54678 (E)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

Adoption of the agenda

The agenda was adopted.

Post-conflict peacebuilding

Report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its first session (S/2007/458)

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received letters from the representatives of Burundi, the Netherlands, Norway and Sierra Leone, in which they request to be invited to participate in the consideration of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council to invite those representatives to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, the representatives of the aforementioned countries took the seats reserved for them at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: In accordance with the understanding reached in the Council's prior consultations, I shall take it that the Security Council agrees to extend an invitation under rule 39 of its provisional rules of procedure to His Excellency Mr. Yukio Takasu, Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

On behalf of the Council, I extend a warm welcome to His Excellency Mr. Yukio Takasu, and invite him to take a seat at the Council table.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda. The Security Council is meeting in accordance with the understanding reached in its prior consultations.

Members of the Council have before them the report of the Peacebuilding Commission on its first session, document S/2007/458.

I now give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Yukio Takasu, Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Mr. Takasu: First of all, on behalf of the members of the Peacebuilding Commission, allow me to express our heartfelt gratitude to you, Mr. President, for providing a timely opportunity to discuss the annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission.

In September 2005, our leaders adopted the World Summit Outcome Document, which explicitly emphasized the need for a "coordinated, coherent and integrated approach to post-conflict peacebuilding and reconciliation with a view to achieving sustainable peace" (*General Assembly resolution 60/1, para. 97*). The Outcome Document further states that the Commission was established "to bring together all relevant actors to marshal resources and to advise on and propose integrated strategies for post-conflict peacebuilding and recovery" (*para. 98*).

With that in mind, let me briefly look back on the first year of the work of the Commission. The first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission, as contained in document S/2007/458, provides a detailed account of the work and activities of the Commission during the first year of its operation. The process of compiling the report reflected the seriousness with which the Commission's membership has undertaken its work and the significance it attaches to its anticipated contribution to peace consolidation and the promotion of national ownership of peacebuilding measures in post-conflict situations. Here, I would like to pay special tribute to Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola for his dedication and leadership in steering the initial stage of the Commission's work.

In the course of approximately 50 formal and informal meetings and briefings held in its various configurations, the Peacebuilding Commission addressed critical organizational, methodological and thematic issues, as well as the country-specific issues of Burundi and Sierra Leone, coordinating various contributions to sustainable peace and opening avenues for mutual commitments between the international community and the countries under consideration. I believe that, in its first year, the Peacebuilding Commission contributed significantly to the promotion of integrated post-conflict peacebuilding strategies in Burundi and Sierra Leone by deepening the dialogue with all relevant stakeholders. As mentioned in the annual report, the Commission intends to further strengthen the effectiveness of its engagement with Burundi and Sierra Leone.

The Commission endorsed the development of the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy (IPBS) for Burundi, of which the Strategic Framework is an important step. A key next step is to develop the in-country tracking and monitoring mechanism, which we already began to take under the guidance of the coordinating Chair, Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway.

In Sierra Leone, the presidential and parliamentary elections were held successfully. Our coordinating Chair of the country-specific meeting on Sierra Leone, Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Netherlands, has just come back from Sierra Leone with the most updated information. Work will continue on the draft of IPBS, so that we may come to an agreement as soon as possible.

The Peacebuilding Commission also sought to accumulate best practices and lessons learned on some critical peacebuilding issues. Through the Working Group on Lessons Learned, the Commission was able to benefit from existing experiences of peace consolidation on such important issues as post-conflict elections and regional approaches to peacebuilding. The Working Group, under the able chairmanship of Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador, intends to consider other relevant issues in the second year.

As clearly underlined in its first annual report, the Peacebuilding Commission faced challenges during the initial phase of establishing its organizational structures, defining its working methods and finding ways to fulfil its core mandates. Some of those challenges will be the subject of additional discussion during the second session. The "Conclusions" section of the report is a reflection on key outstanding issues and challenges before the Commission, namely, the development of monitoring and tracking mechanisms, working methods, advocacy, the Peacebuilding Fund and relationships with other relevant bodies.

The United Nations peacebuilding architecture is now fully in place: the Peacebuilding Commission, comprised of the Organizational Committee, the country-specific meetings and the Working Group on Lessons Learned; the Peacebuilding Fund and its advisory group; and the Peacebuilding Support Office. As the Commission is entering its second year of activity, we must ensure that its activities are carried out in a coherent and integrated manner. We believe it appropriate for the Commission to begin addressing the issues to be considered in adding new countries to the Commission's agenda, in close consultation with the referring bodies, including the Security Council.

Secondly, strengthening the Commission's relationship with relevant bodies and actors, such as the United Nations principal organs, namely the Security Council, the General Assembly, the Economic and Social Council and the Secretariat, funds and programmes, regional and subregional organizations, international financial institutions and civil society, is essential. As part of such efforts, I myself, as Chairman of the Commission, will make constant efforts and avail myself of every opportunity to establish closer working relationships with those organizations. Therefore, Mr. President, I look forward to working closely with you and the Security Council to discharge most effectively the mandates of the Commission and to achieve the purpose of the Commission, which is to bring real beneficial change and to have a tangible impact on the countries and communities in post-conflict situations.

Exploring thematic issues relevant to peacebuilding is also a matter of great importance. I am particularly convinced that discussing broad policy guidance on peacebuilding activities in general, without focusing on a specific country, is worth pursuing.

Raising awareness of the Commission's work, not only among relevant actors but also among the public at large, would greatly enhance the understanding of and bring necessary attention to the work of the Commission and the countries under its consideration. In that regard, we intend to make every effort to heighten the visibility of the Commission's work. At the same time, we would hope for individual Member States to join our efforts to promote the work of the Commission.

As Chairman of the Commission, I would like to assure all members of the Security Council of our full dedication and commitment to the success of the Commission. In that spirit, we ask all of you to lend your valuable and much-needed support to our work at the Commission.

The President: I thank Mr. Takasu for his statement.

In accordance with the understanding reached among Council members, I wish to ask all speakers to limit their statements to no more than five minutes in order to enable the Council to carry out its work expeditiously. Delegations with lengthy statements are kindly requested to circulate their texts in writing and to deliver a condensed version when speaking in the Chamber.

Mr. Churkin (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): First of all, I would like to congratulate the Permanent Representative of Japan, Yukio Takasu, on his appointment to the post of Chairman of the Commission. We would also like to thank the previous Chairmen, Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins and Kenzo Oshima, for the efforts they made in the work of the Commission and the initial stage of its institutional formation.

On the whole, we have a positive view of the first year of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. A new institutional mechanism has been created, which has been given important objectives for coordinating peacebuilding activity. The procedures, format and priorities for activity have been set down. The body has considerable potential and is capable, with time, of becoming one of the key international instruments in this sphere.

A great deal of work has been done on the Commission's country-specific files on Burundi and Sierra Leone. In particular, the existing challenges and gaps in the area of peacebuilding in those countries have already been determined. At the present stage, the objective is achieving progress in the field through a coordinated implementation of the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies in the launching of monitoring mechanisms, with a leading role played by the Governments of the countries that are recipients of assistance.

At the same time, the Commission has not yet been able to overcome the difficulties it encountered in setting up its work. Particular attention should be paid to issues of improving cooperation onsite in all areas of peacebuilding processes and a harmonious coordination of the activities of the Commission with the existing mechanisms for coordination, first and foremost within the United Nations.

In addition, there is a need to establish a clear balance between the responsibilities of Governments and international partners without overloading national authorities with excessive obligations and without duplicating assistance programmes. Any peacebuilding activity must be based on broad national dialogue with all political forces.

In that sense, we are naturally concerned by the existing political and institutional crisis in Burundi in connection with the refusal of the opposition factions to participate in the joint mechanism for verification and observation of the ceasefire. We believe that the Government of Burundi and the international community must make all possible efforts to defuse the political situation in the country and ensure the speedy implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement of 7 September 2006. We welcome of the mediation efforts of the Republic of South Africa and the regional peace initiatives, in particular of Uganda and Tanzania.

We would like to express our satisfaction at the presidential and parliamentary elections that took place in August 2007 in Sierra Leone. The Sierra Leone leadership and people demonstrated their readiness to follow the path of democratic progress and sustainable development. Four priority areas for peacebuilding activities have been identified in Sierra Leone. Now, the Government, with the support of the Commission, the donor community, civil society, nongovernmental organizations and regional and international partners, must focus on developing a strategy for cooperation in the area of peacebuilding. We believe that work will be concluded on the draft by the end of this year.

Of great significance also is the functioning of the monitoring mechanisms of the Integrated Peacebuilding Strategies and other assistance programmes, most notably the poverty reduction strategy. In Burundi, work on the establishment of a monitoring and control mechanism is already under way and the proper functioning of the partners' coordination group must be ensured. In Sierra Leone, particular support to national control mechanisms is needed, in particular the recently created United Nations office for development coordination.

In our view, the objectives of the Commission are enhancing the coordination and productivity of the international community's peacebuilding activities in defining, in close interaction with the Government of the country that is the recipient of assistance, high-priority areas for peacebuilding and the mobilization of donor resources. Of particular importance is the

objective of strengthening the integral link between the Commission and the Security Council on the issues on the agenda of both bodies. It is important to ensure a timely exchange of information and to see that the two bodies complement each other in partnership fashion. We believe that the Council, in its work on Burundi and Sierra Leone, must take into account the recommendations of the Commission. Naturally, this will take place in parallel to the development of links by the Commission with the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, and also with other United Nations bodies, programmes and funds, the donor community and regional organizations.

Currently, the Commission has before it the inclusion of new countries in its agenda. We believe that a decision, after appropriate open discussion, should take into account whether a given country has a real need for international assistance in post-conflict recovery, together with the progress made by the Commission on the country files under its consideration, as well as on the understanding that the Commission is not an additional source of external financing but is, above all, a coordinating and consultative mechanism.

Mr. Voto-Bernales (Peru) (*spoke in Spanish*): I am happy to speak of the concrete achievements of the Peacebuilding Commission in the field, the experience obtained thus far, the general links with this Council as well as the upcoming challenges confronting it.

Permanent peace is an objective that must be accompanied, from an early stage, by a comprehensive project on democracy, social inclusion, institutional foundations and sustainable economic advances. Security, development and respect for human rights reinforce each other. The idea of a new structure for peacebuilding is to strengthen the ability of the United Nations to assist countries to move from conflict situations into lasting and sustainable peace. As has been clearly shown in the case of several countries included in this Council's agenda, peacebuilding activities should be integrated even during peacekeeping operations, that is, once there is an appropriate level of stabilization.

It is true that the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council have their own roles in terms of peacebuilding. However, experience has shown that there is a need for central coordination in all these roles at the heart of the system, and this is a task that the Peacebuilding Commission has taken up with great dynamism.

Even more important than coordination is the drawing up of integrated, peacebuilding strategies which need to be adjusted to the specific needs of each country and which can serve as a guide in that difficult process of transitioning from a chaotic situation to tangible achievements in peacebuilding, such as disarmament, demobilization, integration and reconciliation, the protection of vulnerable populations, the reform of key institutions like the judiciary and the security services, good governance, the creation of democratic customs and tolerance, and the building of a viable economy.

The key task of the Commission is identifying the critical problems related to peacebuilding and generally linked to the deep-rooted causes of conflict. They vary according to country. Failing to pay attention to these problems can lead to a renewal of violence.

In this regard, I would like to highlight the task of identifying specific areas of activity for Burundi and Sierra Leone, the two countries currently on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. The formulation of the Strategic Framework for Burundi marked a considerable advance towards outlining an integrated strategy, and we hope that it will be followed by something similar for Sierra Leone, a country which recently held successful elections.

In its first months of activity, besides addressing its rules of procedure and its organization and methods of work, the Commission adopted from the outset two criteria that we feel are crucial; it sought precise information in the field, and it maintained that the authorities and the society of the country under consideration should steer the process and constantly express their own priorities and opinions. This broad approach has been behind the tangible advances which have been achieved so far and which will allow us to gradually include new countries in the agenda.

Apart from the central role of and the guidance given by the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, we should also point to the importance of the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, headed by Carolyn McAskie. With regard to operational challenges, it is clear that the Commission still has much to do in terms of the monitoring systems for the planned strategies,

both quantitatively and qualitatively. Now we need to make the leap towards more solid achievements in the field, with a more active participation by the respective countries' civil societies.

The Peacebuilding Commission, a governmental advisory body, has the difficult task of improving its links with this Council, with the General Assembly, with the Economic and Social Council and with the different agencies and departments of the United Nations system. An important example of this desire for interaction, which is very practical, is the letter that the Chairman of the Burundi configuration in the Commission sent to the Council, among others, on 25 September, with specific recommendations. The Commission could have a crucial role in terms of advising the Council in very difficult and delicate moments, such as, for example, before the renewal of a mandate of a peacekeeping operation.

We would like to take this opportunity to congratulate and thank Ambassadors Gaspar Martins of Angola and Takasu of Japan first and present Chairs of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, for their work; the representatives of the Netherlands and Norway, Chairs of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone and Burundi; and Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador for her outstanding work in the Working Group on Lessons Learned. Peru, along with the rest of the international community, has great hopes for the effective work of the Peacebuilding Commission. What has been achieved thus far augurs well for the future.

Mr. Okio (Congo) (*spoke in French*): My delegation would like to thank the President for having convened this meeting to consider the first report of the Peacebuilding Commission, a body whose establishment is clearly one of the best outcomes of the 2005 World Summit.

The comprehensive approach which, at the time, inspired the decision on peacebuilding on the part of the world's highest-level leaders, is starting to bear fruit in terms of the work carried out in one year by the Peacebuilding Commission. My delegation would like to pay tribute to His Excellency Mr. Gaspar Martins, Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Angola, who chaired the Commission from the very outset and, through him, to all those who have been working tirelessly with him to bring about the birth of this body.

As is the case with a newborn baby, we all know that it is the very first moments of life that require the greatest attention and care. The key issue here will never be which parent provided more care to the newborn, but rather whether the pooling of efforts in an ongoing interaction was able to ensure the well-being and the best possible development of the newborn. Because of the number of meetings held, the high quality of the results obtained and the commitment in the field, as is indicated in the report of the Secretary-General in document A/62/137, these men and women serving the cause of peace have enabled the United Nations to begin this project successfully, and we congratulate them.

We would like to express our gratitude to Carolyn McAskie, Assistant Secretary-General for Peacebuilding Support, whose commitment and contributions to getting the Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund functioning have been decisive.

Allow me to congratulate Ambassador Yukio Takasu, the new Chairperson of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, for the excellent briefing he has just given us. Through him, I would also like to thank Japan for its unwavering commitment to and support for the work of the Commission, as well as for its contribution to the Peacebuilding Fund. My delegation would like to wish Mr. Takasu every success in his difficult task and in overseeing the future phases of that new body.

For a year now, the Peacebuilding Commission has been carrying out its challenging functions under the constant and careful monitoring of the bodies that established it. The interaction with those bodies did not have the paralyzing effect we had feared, although it seems that it is necessary to further clarify the relationship between the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council as the activity of the Peacebuilding Commission expands.

My delegation believes that, in that tripartite relationship, the Security Council has continued to play its role while being aware of the challenges that arise from the situations on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission and while daily following their development in the light of its own agenda. In that regard, it is clear that the Security Council is the body best equipped to assess the benefits produced by the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission in the two

countries on the Commission's agenda — Burundi and Sierra Leone — in regard to the developments in those countries in recent months. For example, free and transparent presidential and legislative elections were held in Sierra Leone, leading to the establishment of a new Government.

Nevertheless, given the fragile nature of the situation in those two countries, we must continue to accord them attention at the highest level. Even though there are gaps in those two successful experiences, as in all human undertakings, the Council can learn useful lessons from them for the determination of the criteria for inscribing new countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission.

As the report of the Secretary-General (S/2007/458) points out, by putting in place integrated peacebuilding strategies the Peacebuilding Commission has progressively developed a better understanding of the issues and challenges in the field. By adopting a country-specific approach, the Commission has been able to tailor its efforts to the requirements on the ground and to engage in productive dialogue with local authorities and other stakeholders in the search for appropriate strategies. However, the partnership with Sierra Leone and Burundi must be based on national ownership of the process and respect for their own responsibilities and commitments, with a view to overcoming the numerous current and future challenges. Moreover, close coordination between the Commission, national actors and civil society is essential, both in determining goals and in evaluating the efforts undertaken. That entails strengthening on-the-ground verification and follow-up mechanisms.

We would like to emphasize that the summary notes of the Working Group on Lessons Learned underscored the need to include the regional element in peacebuilding strategies for Burundi and Sierra Leone. We believe that that is valid, including for future cases. In some countries conflicts are fuelled by the destabilization of an entire region or of neighbouring countries — as is the case with the conflicts in the Great Lakes region, the complexity of which is not well understood. With regard to the two countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission, we would suggest that the international community should take advantage of the regional actors as intermediaries and of their involvement in the search for sustainable and lasting solutions.

My delegation fully agrees with the methods of work of the Peacebuilding Commission, especially as regards field missions, video-conferencing with major actors on the ground, thematic and country-specific meetings, and presentations by senior officials and experts. However, we believe that, in order to raise the profile of the Commission's work, it may sometimes be necessary to hold coordination meetings in countries concerned.

Lastly, the innovative mechanism that is the Peacebuilding Fund was established, among other things, to provide crucial support during the early stages of a peace process. In that connection, my delegation would like to express its support for the Secretary-General's appeal for contributions to the Fund in order to meet its initial goal of $250 million. In that regard, it would be useful to hold donor meetings of bilateral and multilateral partners, as well as to promote interaction between the Fund's Advisory Group and the members of the Commission. More generally, given the lessons learned from the Fund's current functioning, there is a need for clarification about its relationship with the Peacebuilding Commission and about the process of disbursing funds.

In conclusion, and given the approach adopted by Guinea-Bissau — whose desire to be inscribed on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission Congo supports — my delegation would like to point out that the Council should pay a bit more attention to the issue of placing new countries on the Commission's agenda, with a view to clearly defining the modalities for inscription. We agree that it would be useful to draft the procedure in such a way as to take into account States with a genuine and urgent need for assistance.

Mr. Natalegawa (Indonesia): Let me first express our gratitude to you, Mr. President, for convening this important debate on the first report of the Peacebuilding Commission (S/2007/458). We would also like to thank the Peacebuilding Commission for the presentation of its report, as well as its Chairperson, Ambassador Yukio Takasu of Japan for his remarks.

Having been involved in the deliberations on the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, and as a member of the Commission, Indonesia is pleased to see the Commission and the associated Peacebuilding Fund embark upon the fulfilment of their mandates in the first year. It has not been easy for the Commission

to address the issues of its direction and procedures and at the same time take up the demanding cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone. But it is obvious from the report that the Commission has worked hard in trying to fill the gap in the international post-conflict architecture, which was highlighted in the 2005 World Summit Outcome.

At this juncture, my delegation would like to focus on some of the lessons learned in the past year and to explore practical ways and means by which the Council, pursuant to its role, could assist the Commission to fulfil its goals laid out in resolution 1645 (2005).

First, the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations is now in place. As the conclusion of the report of the Peacebuilding Commission pertinently states, the biggest remaining challenge is how to concretely implement peacebuilding strategies in the field. The fine-tuning efforts by the peacebuilding system in New York should have an impact on the ground that should be felt directly by the community concerned. Maximum effects will be achieved if the Peacebuilding Commission focuses on being practical and results-oriented.

Secondly, the maximum effect in the field can be fulfilled if firm support is offered by all the principal organs of the United Nations, the agencies of the United Nations system and the non-United Nations institutions concerned. Their backing will bolster the efforts of the Peacebuilding Commission and allow the Commission to give its undivided attention to the profound post-conflict issues before it.

As was pointed out last week by some delegations, including my own, during the General Assembly's debate on the reports of the Peacebuilding Commission and the Peacebuilding Fund, we expect the Commission's Organizational Committee to take up specific thematic issues, apart from considering them under the country-specific format.

Thirdly, the Commission has rightly emphasized the importance of addressing good governance, the rule of law, security sector reform, the fight against corruption and human rights for all — the necessary ingredients for the formation of a pluralistic and tolerant society. But the nexus between peace and development is paramount, and it also needs to be clearly incorporated in the outcomes of the Peacebuilding Commission. Lasting peace cannot be achieved in the absence of economic development and an improvement in State capacity. Paying equal attention to the issues of security, democracy and development is key to nurturing a strong pluralistic society.

Fourthly, national ownership is fundamental, but it will emerge only when the post-conflict priorities of a Government are duly respected and become the blueprint for the relevant national and international actors. The Peacebuilding Commission needs to maintain this as its core principle and practice it.

Fifth, in the second year, we expect that the Organizational Committee will expeditiously agree on the as-yet unsettled issues and enhance focus on the substantive factors. It is our view that the Organizational Committee should be the focal point of all the Commission's activities. For its part, the Commission should avoid the misconception that there is a different Commission for each country case and for which there are different country-specific configurations.

Sixth, the Council should continue to work with the Peacebuilding Commission in developing a well-functioning peacebuilding architecture of which the Commission is at the core, complementary with the role and mandates of the Council. Indonesia is aware that some members of the Council have emphasized previously that the Peacebuilding Commission is by nature simply an advisory body of the Council. While recognizing the limited nature of the Commission, the Council should give it more space to innovatively develop its international standing and receive needed international media and public attention. Moreover, the Council should encourage the Commission to reach out and explore engagement with such non-traditional partners as the corporate sector.

As its last point, my delegation would like to touch upon the recent discussions in the Council on how to put new countries on the agenda of the Peacebuilding Commission. That implies that the Council should start considering a sort of internal referral mechanism. With a view to having a flexible mechanism, there are some approaches that could be carefully considered when the Council draws up its internal mechanism.

The whole process should start from the candidate country's demonstrated willingness to be included on the Peacebuilding Commission's agenda.

The Council can invite the candidate country to have a prior consultation with the Council.

We recognize that it is a discretionary power of the Council to make final referral; yet, in order to have a smooth process of referral, the Chairman of the Commission should be kept informed and consulted by the Council. From that preliminary exchange with the Commission, the Council will then be in a better position to give its opinion on the capacity and ability of the Commission to handle a new country. The Council should be convinced that, by referring the country to the Commission's agenda, the Commission could give added value in peace consolidation. The Council may indicate specific challenges posed by the candidate country. Those specific challenges should be drawn up in close coordination with the country concerned and be based on the principle of national ownership.

In closing, allow me to reiterate Indonesia's commitment to the cause of the Peacebuilding Commission. We will continue to engage with others towards our aim of making the outcomes of the Commission tangible.

Mr. Liu Zhenmin (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The Chinese delegation welcomes the Peacebuilding Commission's submission to the Security Council of the first report on its work. We thank you, Sir, for your timely convening of this meeting, which offers us a good opportunity to exchange views.

The Chinese delegation thanks Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola for his outstanding work, and congratulates Japan on assuming the chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission. We trust that, under the leadership of Ambassador Yukio Takasu, the Commission's work will be fruitful in the coming year.

Last week, in the General Assembly's discussion of the Peacebuilding Commission, speakers generally expressed their high appreciation for the Commission's work in its first year. Its accomplishments include the virtual completion of its organizational and procedural work and the provision of assistance to Burundi and Sierra Leone in their peacebuilding processes through country-specific configurations. At the same time, all speakers expressed their high hopes for the Commission's work in the year ahead.

It is generally believed that the Commission faces the following urgent tasks: coordinating with the United Nations system, playing its value-added role to the full, adequately negotiating the balance between partnership and ownership, and exploiting its catalysing functions. In that regard, the Chinese delegation wishes to make the following observations.

First, the Peacebuilding Commission should identify its appropriate relationships with the organs and bodies of the United Nations system. Within the United Nations, the Commission should strengthen its interaction with the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council. In the field, it should make full use of the resources of various projects, funds and peacekeeping missions so as to avoid institutional duplication, resulting in waste.

Secondly, the Commission should effectively play its value-added role. Given the high expectations of the people of Burundi and Sierra Leone, the Commission's work must yield palpable results. It should complete and improve on the integrated peacebuilding strategies and swiftly formulate simple tracking and monitoring mechanisms so as to ensure that all sides fulfil their obligations. The priority areas identified in the strategies should not only include human rights protection, justice and security sector reform, but also address with equal urgency the root causes of conflict, such as poverty and uneven development.

Thirdly, the Commission should adeptly manage the balance between partnership and ownership. In the partnership between the international community and a given country, embodied in the Peacebuilding Commission, the former provides necessary assistance to the latter. A partner can only be a participant, however; a country's fate lies in its own hands. The international community should avoid taking over.

Fourthly, the Commission should establish close ties with the Peacebuilding Fund. Although the Commission cannot micromanage the Fund, a natural relationship exists between them. Established priority areas should be the focal points for support from the Fund. The Secretary-General should provide the Commission with more timely briefings on the operation and implementation of the Fund's projects so as to ensure consistency and transparency in its management.

The Security Council is part of the umbrella under which the Peacebuilding Commission functions

and should therefore strengthen communication between them, ensuring interaction through formal meetings and informal exchanges. The Council can guide the Commission's work and should, to the greatest possible extent, solicit the Commission's expert recommendations so as to devise flexible and workable guiding principles. Moreover, in light of specific issues on its agenda, the Security Council can study potential new subjects for the Commission's consideration.

Mr. Spatafora (Italy): First of all, I wish to thank you, Sir, for organizing this debate, which may help point the discussion on the way forward, and the Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, Ambassador Takasu, for his presentation.

As a member of the Organizational Committee, Italy fully shares and strongly supports Mr. Takasu's agenda, which is our own agenda and an ambitious agenda, as it must be. All of us who took part in the run-up to the Summit discussing this issue, and after the Summit in the run-up to the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, remember very well what we had in mind and what were our expectations and ambitions. I think that, certainly, we must have a realistic and pragmatic approach, but we must also, I repeat, be ambitious. We must have an ambitious agenda so as to live up to the expectations that were the expectations of our leaders in 2005. It would be very sad, to say the least, if we settled for less.

At the outset, I also wish to commend the former Chairman of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Permanent Representative of Angola, for his outstanding efforts in laying the foundation for the Commission's work. The Peacebuilding Commission has succeeded in building its credibility by adopting rules and working methods, developing implementation strategies for countries on the agenda and bringing all the stakeholders together to work towards the same goals, thereby avoiding waste of resources and overlap of programmes. It has not been an easy task, as has been recalled. Thanks to Ambassador Ismael Gaspar Martins' leadership and patience — a lot of patience — we succeeded.

On that basis — and, I wish to emphasize, thanks to the commitment of the Coordinators of the country-specific configurations, the Permanent Representatives of the Netherlands and of Norway — the Commission has adopted a Strategic Framework for Burundi and is currently working on a strategy for Sierra Leone, actively involving all the stakeholders through the United Nations Office on the ground and the Peacebuilding Support Office. I also join others in expressing strong appreciation for the work of Ambassador Gallardo Hernández as Vice-Chair of the Commission and as Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned. Here, I express my disappointment that we are not able to listen to her today on the issue of lessons learned.

Let me also express my strong disappointment at not being able to listen to the voice of the European Union — that is to say, the voice of the most important donor to the United Nations in this field — and to not to be able to listen to the voice of Jamaica as the Non-Aligned Movement (NAM) coordinator, because NAM has a very special take and specific interest on the issue we are discussing today. And, if I am not wrong, all of us around this table are here on behalf of the membership, and being here on behalf of the membership, we have to listen to the membership. And I wonder how we think, for example, that we can encourage the European Union and its 27 member countries to go on being the main donors and to be in the vanguard in implementation and in supporting the Peacebuilding Commission if we do not hear the voice of the European Union around this table.

Now we have to develop a reliable mechanism for monitoring and tracking mutual commitments and trends in the peacebuilding process, without increasing the burden on national Governments. It is of great importance for the effective coordination and strategic advice we all expect from the Peacebuilding Commission that all relevant actors be included in the country-specific configurations. That is why we favour the participation of the European Union, alongside the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. The same holds true for the involvement of civil society, once the guidelines have been adopted for its participation in the work of the Peacebuilding Commission. Now it is crucial to develop an active policy that gears those relationships towards concrete results.

As noted by previous speakers, significant achievements have undoubtedly been made thus far. But one year on, we have to move forward and address new challenges in a creative and flexible way that will help to develop policies that fit diverse situations. If the Peacebuilding Commission wishes to live up to the

ambitions that I mentioned before, it must now articulate a richer and more varied agenda, enlarging its vision of the peace process and its range of action.

First of all, we should start looking at peace processes as a whole. When considering the establishment of a new peacekeeping mission, the Security Council could, as appropriate, take advantage of the advice of the Peacebuilding Commission so that an effective peacebuilding strategy could be envisaged at the earliest possible stage. The entire process centred on the Peacebuilding Commission should be conceived as a relay race, if I may put it that way, involving all the stakeholders. If we do not think in terms of integrated planning processes, we risk failure, wasted effort and a return to conflict.

The Peacebuilding Commission should therefore take on a more proactive role, on a wider radar screen, so to speak, in order to better assure the continuity of what the international community is doing and intends to do to stabilize a country. In line with such an approach and in order to fully comply with its role as an advisory body of the Council, as envisaged by resolution 1645 (2005), the Peacebuilding Commission might become a sort of permanent observatory of potential new countries that are on their way to exiting the immediate conflict phase.

From such a perspective, it should work together better and more effectively with the Department of Peacekeeping Operations, the Department of Political Affairs, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the whole United Nations system to be ready — at the appropriate time and upon request — to address critical situations. That would be a marked improvement over the current procedure of simply waiting until a situation is placed on the table of the Peacebuilding Commission, consequently placing it at the starting point of a process, with the result of losing time and, thus, effectiveness and efficiency. The point is that, when the Peacebuilding Commission has a country situation on its table and begins working on it, that should not be the starting point of a process. Instead, we should already have done our homework in parallel with the peacekeeping aspect. That is why I am speaking of a sort of relay race. At a certain moment, the previous runner — peacekeeping — passes the baton to the next one, who continues the race but who is already prepared rather than starting from scratch.

The Peacebuilding Commission will be judged by concrete results on the ground. Allow me then to make some concrete suggestions for the new Chairman, Ambassador Takasu. He has already covered these areas, in part, in his briefing, so in fact I am only emphasizing what he said earlier. Italy reiterates here its strong appreciation for the work he has already done and again assures him of its strongest support.

First, we must enhance dialogue and focus coordination among all the stakeholders, building on projects already implemented or approved with full respect for national ownership of the process. Here, I also wish to stress, as has recently been said in connection with Afghanistan, that in talking about coordination, the point is that people must be ready to be coordinated. That is also an issue that may cause problems once we are on the ground.

Secondly, we have to involve the international financial institutions at all levels — on the ground, at headquarters and on the executive boards. This has already been said, but we must have more involvement than we have had until now.

Thirdly, we must affirm the strategic role of the Peacebuilding Commission by developing and implementing the integrated peacebuilding strategies, to which all the stakeholders, starting with the United Nations system, should refer, and by designing a credible mechanism to monitor the stabilization process.

Fourthly, we should enlarge the agenda not only by gradually increasing the number of countries but also by increasing the number of thematic debates that might support action on the ground.

Fifthly, we should organize more active participation of the Peacebuilding Commission on the ground by building a more intense relationship with the United Nations country offices, the Resident Coordinators and others.

Sixthly, we must enhance the active involvement of regional and subregional organizations. That is an essential point.

And finally, we must envisage, with the help of the Peacebuilding Support Office, a strategy for reaching out to the donor community and marshalling the resources necessary to implement peacebuilding

strategies without duplication. Given the drastic need for resources, it is all the more important to use them better and to try to achieve predictable financing for medium-term and long-term interventions.

I would also add that I believe that the problem is not the financial resources. When there are ideas and projects — valid projects — the money will come. Let us not focus on marshalling resources — money, money, money. Money will come. The point is elsewhere; the critical point is to plan what we want to do. When we have the projects, the money will come. In fact just yesterday my Ministry, in announcing that we are contributing another €2 million to the Peacebuilding Fund, told me to stress that more millions could very well come, but that we had to be clear about where they would be spent.

Mr. Ripert (France) (*spoke in French*): I would first like to thank you, Mr. President, for having organized the debate that has brought us together today. Last week, the General Assembly held its annual debate on the report of the Peacebuilding Commission (S/2007/458-A/62/137) and the report of the Secretary-General on the Peacebuilding Fund (A/62/138). You yourself, Sir, have been elected a Vice-Chairperson of the Commission. I see this as an example and a welcome sign of good cooperation between the Commission and the two organs upon which it relies.

Like our Italian colleague, we regret that it has not been possible for the European Union and other important speakers to participate in this debate.

I turn now to the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission over the past year, as described in its report. Thanks to the Chairman and other officers of the Commission and the coordinators of the two country-specific configurations, our colleagues from Norway and the Netherlands, a milestone has been achieved: that of establishing the Commission in the administrative and institutional sense. That was not easy because of the unavoidable delays, rivalries and misunderstandings which occur when coordination mechanisms are created. That hampered the beginnings of the Commission to be sure, but today everyone seems to have understood that it was in no one's interest, and especially not in the interest of the countries under consideration, to continue along that path.

The establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission and, in its wake, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Peacebuilding Fund, should enable countries under consideration to emerge quickly and genuinely from crises in which they find themselves and to return to path of sustainable development. It is by that very concrete criterion that we would like to see the Council measure the Commission's progress.

The Peacebuilding Commission has started its activities by focusing on two countries that have been on the Council's agenda for many years, with the goal of strengthening their strategies for emerging from conflict. These countries have been in terrible conflict for many years. These two examples have clearly shown that theory often comes up short when tested against reality in the field. This, however, must not slow our efforts, because we represent an institution whose fundamental role is both to stabilize the emergence from conflict and to prevent the reoccurrence of conflict. It is important to France that the Commission is an essential instrument for conflict prevention and thus for the implementation of the responsibility to protect, a key concept that the Security Council needs to put into practice, as our heads of State or Government decided in September 2005 (see General Assembly resolution 60/1).

Through these two first cases, the Commission has established a process that brings together all of the actors and establishes the basis for a strategy that brings together their efforts.

We would like to welcome the work done to produce the Strategic Framework for peacebuilding in Burundi with a limited number of priorities and commitments in keeping with the crucial issues of peacebuilding in that country. The document was developed in close contact with the Government, but also — and this is an important element — with the political parties, civil society and all parties on the ground. The Commission now needs to advance to the operational stage and guide the implementation of the Strategic Framework. This means supporting necessary actions and projects, following progress and ensuring that the timelines are met, together with making use of locally established mechanisms.

We hope that similar work can rapidly be made on Sierra Leone. We look forward to Ambassador Majoor's return from his visit to Freetown, where a new, democratically elected Government has just begun work.

As my delegation had the occasion to reaffirm last week in the General Assembly, France believes that the Commission should now be hitting its stride. Discussions have already started regarding the possible extension of the agenda to new countries. I hope that all of this reflection will enrich the Council's discussions, as well as those of the other principal organs, and that it reflects an appetite for action, something I view as important.

The issue of expanding the Commission's agenda is indissolubly linked to that of strengthening the Commission. We hope that the Commission will develop its activities and offer the Council its views on new cases, as needs become apparent, and that the Commission will have the capacity to do so. In any event, there is no single solution as the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone have shown. The Council will continue to examine this issue, and I have no doubt that the Council will enjoy a transparent and effective working relationship with the Chairman of the Commission, Ambassador Takasu.

In conclusion, I would like to stress that the purpose of establishing the Peacebuilding Commission goes far beyond establishing a bureaucracy. It is to ensure an appropriate and coordinated response by the international community to post-conflict situations, and to ensure a return to lasting peace. We need to ensure that the Commission continues to be a flexible and responsive mechanism, bringing together all actors and their actions on one single road map.

In September 2005, heads of State or Government committed themselves to help the countries most affected by serious crisis alleviate their extreme poverty. Today, 17 October, the World Day to Overcome Extreme Poverty, we must renew that commitment, as I do on behalf of France.

Sir John Sawers (United Kingdom): I thank you, Mr. President, for convening this debate. In my country's view, better peacebuilding goes to the heart of the Security Council's work. Peacebuilding is about entrenching peace in countries that have been affected by conflict and about building successful countries. It is about stopping wars from breaking out again. Peacebuilding is the best expression of the interrelationship between security, development, good governance and human rights, which are at the heart of the purposes of the United Nations.

That is why the Peacebuilding Commission was such an important achievement at the 2005 World Summit and why so many hopes are focused on its success. After one year of its substantive work, this is a good moment to reflect on how far we have come and how we can build to meet the challenges we face.

I would first commend the work of our Angolan colleague in his chairmanship of the Peacebuilding Commission in its first year and the contribution made by the Vice-Chairs. I very warmly welcome our Japanese colleague as the new Chairman of the Commission. A great deal of time and effort has been put into establishing the Commission and into its initial work on Burundi and Sierra Leone. We are grateful to Norway and the Netherlands for the excellent leadership that they have played on country-specific work.

I would like to echo others in emphasizing that the true value of the Peacebuilding Commission will be where it can add value to the work of the other institutions of the United Nations. We believe that the Peacebuilding Commission can provide a forum where the international community can help countries address the barriers to peacebuilding and help bring coherence and harmonization to the international community's efforts in the country in question.

We need to continue to develop closer and more focused interaction between the Security Council and the Peacebuilding Commission. The Commission's work should not be dominated by process. It must be alive to the challenges faced and provide advice to the Security Council and to other partners on the critical issues that need to be addressed.

I have two modest, practical suggestions for developing those links.

First, we think that there should be regular interaction between the Security Council presidency and the Peacebuilding Commission Chair. That could include discussion of how best to align the work programmes of the two bodies and of how the Commission's capacity for new work — and the formulation of its advice to the Security Council on specific country issues — can best be channelled to the Council.

Secondly, I believe that there is a role for the Security Council itself in requesting advice from the

Peacebuilding Commission on specific issues regarding countries that are on both the Council's agenda and the Commission's agenda — for example, in response to events on the ground. It should be a two-way relationship with a clear division of labour, with the Peacebuilding Commission carrying out its detailed work on peacebuilding issues and providing advice, and with the Security Council taking that advice into account in its work.

An essential part of the Peacebuilding Commission's wider relations involves all the relevant organs of the United Nations: the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council, all of which are important. Ambassador Takasu has acknowledged that, and I welcome the emphasis that he has placed on enhancing the relations between the Peacebuilding Commission and the international financial institutions. That too will be key.

Clearly, the Peacebuilding Commission should not remain static; its agenda should evolve. In looking at new countries for the Commission to include on its agenda, it will be important to consider the capacity implications for the Commission and for the Peacebuilding Support Office. In parallel, we would like the Peacebuilding Commission to assess very soon where it believes it can best add value and what experience and resources are required from Commission members and elsewhere.

We also look to the Peacebuilding Support Office to play a more proactive role. For example, it can assist United Nations country teams with peacebuilding analysis or by providing best practices, and it can help to shape the Peacebuilding Commission's activities. In essence, the Peacebuilding Support Office should become the hub for United Nations activities on peacebuilding issues.

During the Peacebuilding Commission's second year, we look forward to the Commission's building on the substantial achievements of its first 12 months, with the support of the Council and in support of the Council, and to its being able to demonstrate real added value to the other institutions of the United Nations.

Mr. Matulay (Slovakia): I would like to congratulate you, Mr. President, on organizing this important debate to consider the inaugural report of the Peacebuilding Commission (S/2007/458). I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate Ambassador Yukio Takasu on his election as Chairman of the Organizational Committee and to wish him every success in his future endeavours. Our thanks go, of course, to his predecessor for the work done.

The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission was set up with high expectations that it would tackle the daunting task of ensuring post-conflict reconstruction and rehabilitation. With recognition given to the fact that development, peace and security and human rights are mutually reinforcing, the Commission was put in place to offer local, national and international stakeholders in peacebuilding a coordinating forum in which to strengthen their work with one another and with the United Nations.

Indeed, one of the strengths of the Peacebuilding Commission is that it can bring together all key political, military and development stakeholders and that its membership can vary, depending on the country under consideration. In that connection, efforts must be continued to strengthen the modalities and principles of further cooperation, as well as the relationship among the various bodies involved, including the Security Council. The Peacebuilding Commission should also continue to work on how best to relate to civil society.

Backed by a standing Peacebuilding Fund, the Commission is also well equipped to harness international resources and sustained commitment from donor partners, which are necessary to effectively support its growing work in the field. However, the Fund was designed not to finance long-term peacebuilding requirements, but rather to fill funding gaps at the earliest stages of the recovery process.

The third pillar, the Peacebuilding Support Office, is actively supporting the Peacebuilding Commission in its important work, both in the field and at Headquarters. Concerning the ongoing efforts to strengthen the institutional capacity of the Organization — and in that context, I mean restructuring and reform of the Secretariat — we must ensure that the Peacebuilding Support Office is placed within the structure of the Secretariat in a way that allows it to respond effectively to the demands placed on it.

A little more than a year after the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission, the reaction to its functioning has been positive overall. My delegation,

too, believes that the Commission is steadily becoming a proactive force within the peacebuilding community.

During the reporting period, the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission reached an agreement on the participation of key institutional donors, fully engaged with the Governments of Burundi and Sierra Leone, and maximized the involvement of parties in the field, including national authorities, United Nations country teams and civil society organizations. The Commission was also able to adopt work plans for Burundi and Sierra Leone. It identified critical priority areas for peace consolidation in each of the two countries and launched processes for the development of integrated peacebuilding strategies.

It is crucial to sustain the political and financial support for those countries in order to help them stay on track for peace. An important part of that effort will be the development of benchmarks and monitoring mechanisms to assess risks to the peace process in the two countries. These are also necessary in order to review country involvement and to monitor the progress of implementation.

The overarching goal of peacebuilding must be to strengthen the capacity of societies to manage conflict without violence. Long-term priorities must include building national institutions, including in the security sector; fostering an all-inclusive political environment; strengthening respect for human rights; and promoting steady economic growth that reduces social tensions.

National ownership of recovery strategies is essential. The complexities of current conflicts and of our peacebuilding efforts call for close coordination with national actors in order to identify their short-, medium- and long-term objectives. What is most important in the work of the Commission is to make tangible progress on the ground.

My delegation has strongly supported the role of the Peacebuilding Commission within the United Nations, which consists of drawing on lessons learned and becoming the repository for advice on critical peacebuilding issues. We welcome the establishment of the Working Group on Lessons Learned, which includes broad participation by all Commission members.

There is no shortage of countries that need help getting on their feet. The Commission could begin considering the possible addition of a country or countries to its agenda, within manageable limits.

There is real interest among United Nations Members in the Peacebuilding Commission and in what it could do to draw fragile States into the mainstream of democracy and development. It is of great importance that the Commission show results, so that donors and other international and regional actors engaged in the process can have a strong basis for continuing to strengthen their involvement and for providing increased funding. In that context, the Security Council should work hard to make the Commission a success by engaging effectively and constructively in its work.

In conclusion, Slovakia shares the disappointment expressed by the representative of Italy that agreement was not reached on allowing other important United Nations Member States to speak in this debate — in particular, Portugal, on behalf of the presidency of the European Union; El Salvador, as Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned; and Jamaica, as coordinator of the Non-Aligned Movement.

Mr. Verbeke (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium attaches great importance to the Peacebuilding Commission. We believe that, in general, we can welcome the work accomplished during the first year of its existence.

At the outset, my delegation would like to recall the multidimensional nature of the Peacebuilding Commission. It is an organ that is at the crossroads of issues relating to concepts such as security, rehabilitation, reconstruction and development. That, moreover, explains its twofold provenance, namely, the Security Council and the General Assembly.

This multidimensionality is reflected in what is the primary task of the Peacebuilding Commission: promoting an integrated approach that takes into account the particular needs of fragile States and potential risks of relapse.

Through such an integrated approach, the Peacebuilding Commission can pave the way for cooperation for classical development by dealing with difficult and critical issues concerned with policy, national reconciliation, drafting a constitution, electoral processes, establishing and strengthening

institutions, security, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, justice, the rule of law and transitional justice, but also, inter alia, the return of refugees, access to the media, the employment of young people, or land ownership disputes. It is important for the Peacebuilding Commission to identify in these sectors risks to peacebuilding and means to cope with them.

My delegation welcomes the work that has been done at the Burundi and Sierra Leone country-specific meetings. We welcome the fact that substantive debates have prevailed over procedural ones. On the whole, the various dimensions previously cited have been properly integrated into peacebuilding strategies for these two countries.

It is important, however, to ensure that Integrated Peacebuilding Strategy (IPBS) is not viewed as a framework for supplemental development, alternative to or competitive with existing strategies.

The operational follow-up of Commission recommendations should be done on the basis of benchmarks through monitoring mechanisms that still need to be worked out. The Peacebuilding Commission should not, however, be locked into an excessively rigid mechanism. To remain flexible, it must be able, in real time, to make recommendations correlated with developments in the field, as was fortunately the case for Burundi recently.

My delegation believes that the Peacebuilding Commission is now in a position to take up other countries. Under resolution 1645 (2005), the Security Council has a key role to play, in consultation, naturally, with the Peacebuilding Commission. The Council must not be solely reactive in the choice of countries that could properly benefit from working with the Peacebuilding Commission and consider the specific merits of each file.

It is also important for the Council to spell out, when possible and when necessary, specifically what it expects of the Peacebuilding Commission when it is planning to put a new country file before the Commission. On the other hand, a candidate member must have a good understanding of the nature of the Peacebuilding Commission and what it can legitimately expect from it. In the light of that, we might wonder whether the Peacebuilding Commission needs to draw up an integrated peacebuilding strategy for each country on its agenda. One might imagine for some countries approaches that, to be sure, would be integrated, but more specifically targeted to those needs and situations where the Peacebuilding Commission could provide clear and specific added value to the efforts made by the countries involved.

The expectations of the Peacebuilding Commission are justifiably high. However, the Commission is not an operational but an advisory body. Its objective is to exert an effective impact on the field by acting so that, through wise advice and views, the various bilateral and multilateral players can assist the Governments involved in coping in the most appropriate manner with the challenges of a fragile peace.

A source of confusion is, and it is our duty to venture to say this, the fact that today we also have a Peacebuilding Fund, and its role is not to replace the conventional donors, but rather to provide financing for critical gaps or to operate as a catalyst fund. In the specific cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, there is additional confusion because the offices that the Security Council has established in these two countries have mandates with a strong peacebuilding aspect. These offices depend, however, on the Department of Peacekeeping Operations and not on the Peacebuilding Support Office. There is a need to clarify the role that these offices will be playing in the future in the specific context of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Belgium is confident that the work of the Peacebuilding Commission will soon attain cruising speed. In the view of my delegation, it is important for us to have far-reaching goals, but also to be realistic at the same time, and that indeed will be the key to the success of the Commission.

In conclusion, I wish to thank the Support Office headed by the Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie for the work that she had done, and to voice our full confidence in the chairmanship of Ambassador Takasu of Japan and, of course, to thank our colleague from Angola, Ambassador Gaspar Martins, for having set the Peacebuilding Commission on the right path.

Mr. Arias (Panama) (*spoke in Spanish*): Thank you for convening this meeting, Mr. President. First of all, allow me to welcome and thank Ambassador Takasu for his detailed presentation and to reiterate the support of my delegation for him as Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Today we are examining both the form and the substance of the work of the Peacebuilding Commission in carrying out the mandate given to it by the heads of State and Government at the 2005 World Summit. As members of the Commission, we have witnessed the arduous work that has been carried out and the fruits of its first year of work. In this context, we feel it is necessary to recognize the work completed by the first Chair of the Organizational Committee, Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, by the Vice-Presidents of the country-specific meetings for Burundi and Sierra Leone, Ambassador Johan Løvald of Norway and Ambassador Frank Majoor of the Kingdom of the Netherlands, as well as the work completed by Vice-Chair of the Group on Lessons Learned, Ambassador Carmen María Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador, and the support of Ms. Carolyn McAskie and her team. We would like to thank each of them for their excellent contribution.

Panama applauds the role of the Commission during the initial stages in developing coordinated, coherent and integrated responses to threats to peacebuilding, especially in the specific cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone. It must be recognized that the Commission also made efforts to ensure the participation of civil society, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, the European Union, and the Organization of the Islamic Conference. That contributed positively to the development of the operational criteria for the work of the Commission.

Notwithstanding these achievements, there are many challenges for this body in its second session, in order to ensure that it has a true and lasting impact in the field. Among them, the Commission will have to redefine its working methods with a view to ensuring that they are sustainable. It needs to ensure concrete indicators to measure the implementation of integrated strategies. It also needs to increase the participation of regional and subregional organizations to its work.

Clearly, the Commission could usefully include more countries in its agenda, taking into account its capacities and the lessons learned from the two pilot cases. But it needs to define appropriate criteria for the process, ensuring that whichever country it happens to be is ready to benefit from the work of the Commission. On this point, I would support what was said by the representative of Indonesia, which I thought was particularly clear, precise and pertinent.

The work of the Commission is clearly urgent and should be recognized as such. For that we need to design a communications and information strategy that will ensure that its mission and achievements are known to all.

The responsibility of ensuring the success of the Commission is that of the entire Organization. The Security Council, together with the Commission, needs to decide on criteria and mechanisms so as to avoid duplication and ensure the complementarity of efforts deployed in the countries that are on their agendas. That will be an important step in redoubling our efforts during the second session to ensure that the countries being considered by the Commission achieve peace and sustainable and socially responsible development.

Finally, allow me to make a brief comment on our meeting today. I understand that the main objective of this meeting was to receive a report from the Peacebuilding Commission that would allow the Security Council to carry out its work in the next year. I share the opinion of the representatives of Italy and Slovakia that it would have been preferable to allow all persons directly linked or interested in the work of the Commission to speak to us. I would like to specifically mention the interest in doing so expressed by Ambassador Gallardo Hernández, and the evident interest in doing so expressed by the Non-Aligned Movement and the European Union. I also think that it would have been preferable to hear those people before the members of the Security Council gave their opinions on these issues.

Mr. Kumalo (South Africa): We too believe that it is important for the Security Council to debate the report of the Peacebuilding Commission. South Africa would have aligned itself with the statement to be made by the distinguished representative of Jamaica on behalf of the Non-Aligned Movement and regret that he will not be able to participate in this debate.

We would like to thank the Chairperson of the Commission's first Organizational Committee, Ambassador Ismael Abraão Gaspar Martins, the Permanent Representative of Angola. We also wish to extend our gratitude to the contribution made by the Chairs of the country-specific configurations, the Netherlands's Ambassador Frank Majoor, on Sierra Leone, and Norway's Ambassador Johan Løvald, on Burundi. The Working Group on Lessons Learned,

chaired by Ambassador Gallardo Hernández of El Salvador, has also started very important work, from which this Council could have benefited. All of their work has made a difference in the lives of the people of the two African countries, which have just emerged from conflict.

We believe that the Commission is poised for even more success under the leadership of Japan's Ambassador Yukio Takasu, the newly elected Chairperson of the Commission's Organizational Committee.

In its first year, under the excellent leadership of Angola, the Commission was able to operate within a flexible framework, in order to develop working relationships with all its various partners and constituencies. In that context, the Commission adopted provisional rules of procedure, provisional guidelines on the participation of civil society and a country-specific format to consider the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone. The processes for developing integrated peacebuilding strategies were also launched.

It is important that the Commission continue to be driven by member States. In that context, the Organizational Committee must continue to be the focal point of all the Commission's activities and decisions, and its central role should be strengthened. In other words, we believe that the Organizational Committee of the Commission must be the master of its own procedures.

In the year ahead, under the able leadership of Japan, the Commission must work towards more practical and concrete outcomes from its efforts to promote peace consolidation. The success of the Commission will be judged by its ability to make a real difference on the ground, far away from New York, in places such as Freetown, Bujumbura and beyond.

The ultimate success of the Commission's work lies in the transformation of all of its plans and policies into concrete actions. The main challenge facing the Commission is to maximize its impact on the ground in full alignment and cooperation with the policies and strategies of the national Governments.

On the issue of national ownership, we should ensure that the countries emerging from conflict have full ownership of peacebuilding processes for the benefit of all their people. In that regard, we believe that the concerned countries must be allowed a genuine national ownership in identifying priorities for peacebuilding. In addition, while there is no argument that the Commission has an advisory role, the Commission should be prepared to listen to the priorities, needs and views of the country under consideration. After all, the primary clients of the Commission are the countries emerging from conflict.

The Peacebuilding Fund was created for the specific purpose of assisting in the facilitation of peacebuilding activities. In this context, the Fund was understood to be a catalyst for attracting much-needed official development assistance and resources, particularly at times when there may be little hope of success towards recovery. It is for that reason that we hope that there will be clarity on the role of the Peacebuilding Fund.

Quick-impact projects and a sufficient injection of predictable resources in a country emerging from conflict is crucial to ensuring stability and development on the ground. For that reason, the invaluable support provided by the donor community to the activities of the Commission needs to be consolidated and enhanced if we are to succeed in achieving peace, security and development, in particular in the early post-conflict stages.

However, it should be made clear that the Peacebuilding Fund cannot and should not replace regular official development assistance. The simple reason is that the Peacebuilding Fund will never raise enough contributions to rival the United Nations Development Programme or even the World Bank. Its role is simply to be a bridge and a catalyst for attracting long-term development aid to countries that have emerged from conflict.

The Commission needs to further strengthen its relationship with relevant organs and institutions, including the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and regional and subregional organizations. The African Union continues to play its role in the peacebuilding field, including through the adoption of a post-conflict reconstruction and development policy. It is for that reason that we hope that in the year ahead the Commission will strengthen its cooperation with the relevant subregional bodies on the African continent. The African Union and regional economic communities, including the African Development

Bank, have a key supportive role to play in peacebuilding efforts. The ability of the Commission to coordinate with those bodies can only improve the lives of people on the ground.

Finally, my delegation has followed with interest the debate about whether so-called criteria should be developed for countries that are referred to the Commission. We believe that the criteria for countries to be included on the Commission agenda are already contained in the resolutions that created that body. Any further so-called criteria will have the undesirable effect of micromanaging the work of the Commission's Organizational Committee. In that context, South Africa strongly supports the request by the Government of Guinea-Bissau to be included on the agenda of the Commission.

Mr. Al-Nasser (Qatar) *(spoke in Arabic)*: Thank you for holding this important meeting, in the form of an open debate, to consider the first annual report of the Peacebuilding Commission. This constitutes an important opportunity to review the activities of the Commission and to discuss the best ways to support it. I would also like to welcome Ambassador Takasu, the Permanent Representative of Japan and Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, and to thank him for his statement. I wish to thank the previous Chair of the Commission, Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola, for the effort he put forward during his chairmanship.

During its first year of operation, the Peacebuilding Commission made commendable progress, in terms not only of procedural and organizational matters, such as the adoption of the provisional rules of procedure, but also of systemic issues, such as reaching agreement on the concept paper that provides the appropriate framework for developing an integrated peacebuilding strategy. Of no less importance are the tangible results achieved by the Commission in the context of peacebuilding in each of the two countries under its consideration, Burundi and Sierra Leone, where the Commission covered new ground in its attempt to bring more coherence and impact to the international community's approach to peacebuilding.

The Peacebuilding Commission has proved that its effectiveness in peacebuilding transcends the provision of financial support to post-conflict countries and that it extends to numerous other areas, thereby achieving the vision of an integrated approach to peacebuilding, on the basis of which the Commission was established. While everyone is aware that the Peacebuilding Commission is not a donor agency, it has proved from the outset that it can be an effective factor in mobilizing financial support from donors.

In addition, the first year since the inception of the peacebuilding mechanism, which emerged from the 2005 World Summit, saw the operationalization of the Peacebuilding Support Office within the Secretariat and the Peacebuilding Fund, which started to receive donations and to provide funding for a number of projects.

There is no doubt that this progress is encouraging; yet, according to the Peacebuilding Commission's report, a number of challenges still face the Commission. In its new session, the Peacebuilding Commission must continue to develop its working methods, strengthen the importance of the integrated peacebuilding strategy, and establish tracking and monitoring mechanisms to measure the success of that strategy. It would be useful to continue the balance between the work of the Organizational Committee and the country-specific configurations, given their complementary nature. On the other hand, the coordination between the Peacebuilding Commission, the Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office must continue to be improved.

In order for the Peacebuilding Commission to succeed in achieving its goals, post-conflict countries which are under consideration at regional meetings must have full ownership of the peacebuilding process for the benefit of their peoples. It is essential that the Commission and the Governments of those countries agree on how to move forward on peacebuilding activities.

Under General Assembly resolution 60/180 and Security Council resolution 1645 (2005), the mandate of the Commission provides for consultation with civil society, non-governmental organizations and the private sector, since those actors play important roles in post-conflict peacebuilding. Consequently, we welcome the adoption by the Organizational Committee of provisional guidelines that ensure active and productive participation by those players in the process, and we hope that those guidelines continue to be reviewed and improved.

The mandate of the Commission provides for the participation of the stakeholders in the Commission's

work, and in this context we commend the Organizational Committee's decision to extend permanent invitations to institutional donors to participate in all Peacebuilding Commission meetings.

The 2005 World Summit decided to establish the Peacebuilding Commission as a joint advisory body reporting to both the General Assembly and the Security Council. Accordingly, the Commission must operate within the mandate given by those two bodies. The recent meeting of the General Assembly that considered the Peacebuilding Commission's annual report demonstrated clearly the close attention given by the Assembly to the work of the Commission. In general, close coordination must exist between the Commission and the main bodies and organs of the United Nations, including the General Assembly, the Security Council and the Economic and Social Council.

The Peacebuilding Commission, having scored a preliminary success with the first two countries under its consideration, it is only natural that we should ensure that more countries benefit from its services in the course of the coming stages of its work. In considering candidate countries, due consideration must be given to their varied conditions and, therefore, to the most appropriate manner of administering the peacebuilding process. Consideration must also be given to how much the candidate country can benefit from being included in the Commission's agenda.

Finally, we commend the effective efforts of Ambassador Gaspar Martins, the Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission during its first session, and the two Vice-Chairs and the Chairs of the two country-specific configurations. We wish also to commend the Peacebuilding Support Office, headed by Assistant Secretary-General McAskie, and the great work that the office has undertaken in implementing its responsibilities.

Ms. Wolcott (United States): The United States believes strongly in the importance of a successful United Nations Peacebuilding Commission. We appreciate the report presented today by Ambassador Takasu.

Preventing a reversion to violence in post-conflict States through sustainable peacebuilding is in the interest of all members of the international community. We applaud the accomplishments of the Peacebuilding Commission during the difficult early days of establishing a new institution. These are the first steps towards achieving coordinated peacebuilding structures that produce tangible and sustainable results. We view the Peacebuilding Commission as, potentially, a key part of the United Nations peacebuilding architecture.

The Peacebuilding Commission's efforts at integrated peacebuilding strategies for the first countries under the Peacebuilding Commission's review, Sierra Leone and Burundi, are a valuable exercise in promoting better dialogue among Governments, civil society representatives, the international community and other relevant actors. We look forward to seeing these strategies translated into concrete programmes and institutions that serve the people of Burundi and Sierra Leone and form the foundation for healthy, peaceful societies in these States.

Tracking and monitoring mechanisms for integrated peacebuilding in countries under Peacebuilding Commission review can be helpful in identifying gaps with precision and allowing for the more effective marshalling of resources for the purpose of creating sustainable peace.

We would support formation of a roster of experts who, in coordination with the efforts of other related offices in the United Nations system could assist the Peacebuilding Commission by drawing on existing initiatives. Our own peacebuilding experts in the Office of the Coordinator for Reconstruction and Stabilization stand ready to work with the Peacebuilding Commission.

The United States has still not contributed to the Peacebuilding Fund, but we are in the process of assessing the Fund's performance, as seen in its first year of operation. We urge the Secretary-General to consider commissioning an independent evaluation of the Fund. We are particularly interested in the ultimate sustainability of the initial projects funded by the Fund, given that it is meant to have a catalytic effect in bringing about sustained support.

We see the Peacebuilding Commission as having a unique niche in the United Nations system, the focal point for garnering long-term political will from the international community and coordinating long-term efforts to ensure sustainable peacebuilding.

We would like to see the role of the Peacebuilding Commission strengthened in the United

Nations system. We look forward to stronger engagement by the Peacebuilding Commission with the Security Council, the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council.

We would like to highlight our appreciation for the work of the Peacebuilding Commission's Working Group on Lessons Learned, which is chaired by El Salvador and in which the experiences of post-conflict countries are drawn upon to accumulate best peacebuilding practices.

Let me also add my country's thanks, as well as my own, for the work of Angola, the Netherlands and Norway on the Peacebuilding Commission this past year.

The United States looks forward to discussion of the Peacebuilding Commission's future agenda and capacity to take on new countries. At this early stage of the Peacebuilding Commission's development, we want to be sure that the Commission does not overextend itself and that, instead, it has solid successes, with a realistic agenda derived from judicious consideration of the many post-conflict countries that could benefit from the Commission's review. As we gradually build up the experience and capacity of the Peacebuilding Commission, we should consider how it can assist countries with United Nations peacekeeping missions that are winding down, to ensure that their peacebuilding phase is sustained and successful.

In addition, we look forward to considering new modes for the engagement of the Peacebuilding Commission that are tailored to the needs of particular countries and to allow more efficient use of the Commission's resources.

The President: I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Ghana.

My delegation wishes to thank Ambassador Yukio Takasu, Chairman of the Organizational Committee of the Peacebuilding Commission, for his introduction of the first annual report (S/2007/458) of the Peacebuilding Commission. I also wish to commend Ambassador Gaspar Martins of Angola for his pioneering role — supported by the Peacebuilding Support Office, led by Assistant Secretary-General Carolyn McAskie — as the first Chairperson of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The annual report highlights some of the progress made by, and the challenges confronting, the Peacebuilding Commission. Notable among the Commission's achievements has been its ongoing task of assisting the two countries currently on its agenda, namely, Burundi and Sierra Leone, to develop and implement peacebuilding strategies based on priorities identified in the light of the principle of national ownership. Some challenges have also been spelled out in the annual report, as well as in statements we have heard from various delegations this morning, which should merit the Council's due consideration.

One year after it was established, a clear consensus has yet to emerge about aspects of the Peacebuilding Commission's conceptual design, operational methods and relationship with other United Nations bodies and non-United Nations entities, as well as between the Commission's own configurations. The recent request by Guinea-Bissau to be placed by the Security Council on the agenda of the Commission, which Ghana supports, has brought some of those issues into sharp focus.

Questions have been asked as to how many countries should be on the Commission's agenda at any given time, and what eligibility criteria should be used; whether, besides the Security Council, other organs, such as the Economic and Social Council, that deal with the socio-economic recovery and development of post-conflict countries may refer countries to the Peacebuilding Commission for inclusion in its agenda; and whether the Commission, which was essentially established as an intergovernmental advisory body, may offer advice to all relevant countries on the Council's agenda that are making the transition from war to peace, in particular those at the risk of relapsing into a cycle of violence.

Any meaningful attempt to answer those and other questions exercising the minds of many must take due cognizance of the circumstances leading to the adoption, on 20 December 2005, of concurrent resolutions of the General Assembly and the Security Council, namely, resolutions 60/180 and 1645 (2005). Those resolutions led to the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission as a hybrid subsidiary body of both organs. The Commission is unique, and the first institutional mechanism of the United Nations of its kind. The Commission, together with the

Peacebuilding Fund and the Peacebuilding Support Office, constitutes the peacebuilding architecture constructed in our collective quest to reform the United Nations.

Following the lessons learned from the experience of many countries that relapsed into conflict a few short years after peace agreements were signed, the Peacebuilding Commission was designed to fill an institutional gap within the United Nations by addressing the deficit in international attention on countries in post-conflict situations. It was also intended to help bridge the financial and other resource gaps by playing an advocacy and catalytic role in mobilizing national and international resources to sustain peace. To that end, the Commission must become more proactive in mobilizing the support of international financial institutions and other donors to enable the Peacebuilding Fund to close the gap between pledges and commitment. The Commission must also be more proactive in engaging civil society to enhance the prospects of peacebuilding initiatives at the local and community levels.

The Peacebuilding Commission itself must be adequately resourced to strengthen its capacity to accept more countries on its agenda. In that regard, further improvements in its working methods, taking into account lessons learned in its first year of operation, may be necessary. Who qualifies to be on the agenda of the Commission should be determined by need and reality. Ghana looks forward to working together with other members of the Security Council to achieve the necessary consensus on the request by Guinea-Bissau to be placed on the Commission's agenda sooner rather later. But the door should not be closed to other deserving countries, whether they have peacekeeping operations or not, because peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations should not necessarily be viewed as mutually exclusive, but rather as mutually reinforcing.

In conclusion, the ultimate purpose of the Peacebuilding Commission is to help national and transitional authorities to rebuild institutions of democratic accountability and good governance that will be capable of sustaining peace long after external peacemakers and peacekeepers have left, in order to avert a relapse into violence. National ownership should remain the core principle of peacebuilding, focusing on rebuilding national capacity to sustain peace.

To be sustainable, peacebuilding efforts must deal with the root causes of conflict by tackling poverty, injustice and inequitable development, the promotion of a culture of respect for the rule of law and human rights, and adherence to the highest standards of good governance and good citizenship. The African Union's Post-Conflict Reconstruction Policy Framework, which places emphasis on tackling root causes of conflict, may be relevant in the Commission's effort to mobilize regional support for its mandate.

Finally, Ghana remains committed to the objectives of the Peacebuilding Commission, and calls on the international community to approach the challenges of peacebuilding in a coordinated, integrated, flexible and efficient manner in order that post-conflict countries will not relapse, while also ensuring that the peacebuilding architecture of the United Nations, erected through difficult negotiations and compromises, does not collapse.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I give the floor to the representative of the Netherlands.

Mr. Majoor (Netherlands): I would like to thank you, Mr. President, for giving me this opportunity to join with the Security Council at this important moment as it debates the first annual report (S/2007/458) of the Peacebuilding Commission.

The first year of the Commission's operation has, in many respects, been a challenging one. As Ambassador Takasu of Japan, the recently elected Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission, said earlier in this meeting, the Peacebuilding Commission has had a full agenda, centred on the first two countries to be considered by that newly established body, namely, Burundi and Sierra Leone. Allow me, in my capacity as Chair of the country-specific meetings on Sierra Leone, to focus in particular on the work that has been undertaken within that context, and to add some remarks of a more general nature.

I have just returned from a mission to Sierra Leone, regarding which I intend to give members of the Peacebuilding Commission a full briefing later this week. I shall gladly brief the Council in detail at a later stage, if its members so wish. Allow me to highlight only a few aspects.

My mission was intended to secure the continued commitment of the newly elected Government of Sierra Leone with regard to the country-specific work that has been undertaken in the Peacebuilding Commission. That has to do in particular with the four priorities for peacebuilding that were identified at the end of 2006, which have guided our work since. They are: justice and security sector reform; good governance and the consolidation of democracy; the empowerment and employment of young people; and capacity building. In that context, I should also note the recognized relevance of gender equality and human rights as cross-cutting issues in terms of building and sustaining peace in Sierra Leone, as well as the continued need for urgent improvement of the infrastructure in Sierra Leone, in particular for the supply of energy. The newly elected President of Sierra Leone, Ernest Koroma, has endorsed those priorities, which were also reflected in his acceptance speech delivered to Parliament on 5 October 2007.

I have equally sought and secured the new Government's commitment to the finalization of the draft framework for cooperation that was drafted in the course of 2007. The framework, which is to guide the relationship between the Peacebuilding Commission and Sierra Leone, is intended as a means to obtain engagements by all actors — the Government as well as the members of the Commission and other relevant parties — under the four priority areas that I have mentioned. In cooperation with the Sierra Leone Government, which is leading the process, we intend to finalize the framework by the end of this year.

The pace of progress made within the Peacebuilding Commission in its first year in relation to Sierra Leone was greatly determined by the presidential and parliamentary elections in the country, which took place over the past two months. Following a request by the Security Council, the Peacebuilding Commission monitored the Sierra Leone election process and issued a declaration that was subsequently transmitted to this Council.

The elections that have taken place in Sierra Leone, which have been generally peaceful and have seen a high voter turn-out, can be labelled as a landmark in the democratic process in the country. That holds true for the preparation of the elections, the elections themselves, and the ongoing transition process. They have proved that the people of Sierra Leone are investing their hopes in a democratic future in which all segments of the population can make their voices heard.

While that is a highly important achievement in a country that was left ravaged by war some five years ago, crucial challenges to sustainable peace remain in the areas that I have mentioned. Moreover, the expectations of the people of Sierra Leone are high. Both continue to justify the active involvement of the Peacebuilding Commission, together with the Sierra Leone Government — notably, also in view of the local elections next year, which will require strengthened local institutions. The Peacebuilding Commission will also continue to have a critical role in strengthening the dialogue between the Government of Sierra Leone and the international community.

The Peacebuilding Commission has had to develop its work programme without pre-established models. It was given and has taken the opportunity to define its activities in relation to the countries on its agenda in function of their needs and of the practical possibilities for engagement. That has led to the practice of holding regular meetings of the Commission in its country-specific formats that have proved highly effective. The regular use of video-link technology has enabled a close, real-time dialogue between the Peacebuilding Commission in New York and all actors in-country: the Government, non-governmental organizations, civil society and the local donor community.

More importantly, the working procedures of the Peacebuilding Commission have led to a process that was and is fully owned by the Government of Sierra Leone and that has benefited from the informed inputs of many actors, notably civil society representatives and non-governmental organizations. In that context, I would also like to mention the important contributions of the Peacebuilding Support Office and the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone to our work.

At present, we have before us a draft cooperation framework that, once further refined, will provide a strong basis for concrete commitment by all based on mutual accountability and with a mechanism for their regular monitoring and review. I am confident that by proceeding on the current track, the Peacebuilding Commission will be able to make a significant contribution to peacebuilding in Sierra Leone.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Norway.

Mr. Løvald (Norway): Since the debate on peacebuilding that the Security Council had in January, the Peacebuilding Commission has made considerable progress, as pointed out in its annual report, including in its Burundi-specific configuration, which I have the pleasure of chairing.

Bearing in mind the Security Council's original request for advice on Burundi, I would like to focus my intervention on the progress made and the challenges ahead in the Peacebuilding Commission's work on Burundi.

First, I should like to emphasize the importance of national ownership and commend the Government and people of Burundi for their active and constructive cooperation in peace consolidation. Based on that cooperation, the Peacebuilding Commission has been able to identify priorities for peacebuilding and how to address them, not least through the development of the Strategic Framework for peacebuilding in Burundi, which was a significant achievement. The consultative process in Burundi during the development of the Strategic Framework was appreciated, and we encourage continued and open dialogue between all stakeholders in the country.

Secondly, while we have focused so far on peacebuilding priorities, we are now, in this second year of work, shifting our focus to how to deal with those priorities. We are now in the process of setting up a monitoring and tracking mechanism for the Strategic Framework. In other words, we are moving from identification to implementation. We hope to finalize work on the mechanism in the near future. It will be crucial in our efforts to make sure that consolidation of peace actually happens. Again, the Government carries a special responsibility, but so do other stakeholders. Resource mobilization will be a crucial element in that regard. The present precarious budgetary situation in Burundi bears strong testimony to that.

Thirdly, also in the case of Burundi, there is no development without security and no security without development. As regards the security situation, I wish to draw the Council's attention to the conclusions and recommendations on peacebuilding in Burundi forwarded to the President of the Security Council in my letter dated 20 September 2007. The conclusions and recommendations addressed some of the key challenges facing the country at this time, including the implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement between the Government of Burundi and the Palipehutu-Forces Nationales de Libération (Palipehutu-FNL). A specific recommendation was given to the Government of Burundi to continue to explore all ways to resolve its differences with the leaders of the Palipehutu-FNL. A specific recommendation was also given to the Palipehutu-FNL to resume promptly, without condition, its participation in the work of the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism and constructively to re-engage with the Government with a view to resolving differences. This is an issue that is still a matter of concern.

I recall that the Peacebuilding Commission, in its recommendation to the Security Council, asked the Council to continue to closely monitor the situation in Burundi, in particular with respect to the effective implementation of the Comprehensive Ceasefire Agreement and to consider, if necessary, undertaking appropriate action with a view to the effective implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement by the set deadline.

The regional initiative and the South African facilitator are working actively to facilitate dialogue among the parties and to bring the Palipehutu-FNL back to the Joint Verification and Monitoring Mechanism. Their efforts need our support. I would therefore wish to reiterate the call on the Security Council to address that issue and to take concrete measures, as it might see fit, with a view to contributing to the resolution of that outstanding issue.

The importance of the resolution of the issue cannot be emphasized enough. The people of Burundi deserve peace so that other pressing issues in terms of political stabilization and economic development can be achieved. The Security Council's concrete contribution to the achievement of that objective would be timely and invaluable.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Sierra Leone.

Mr. Pemagbi (Sierra Leone): Sierra Leone congratulates you, Sir, on your assumption of the presidency of the Council for the month of October 2007. We assure you, and the Council, of our full and unwavering support.

We deeply appreciate the opportunity to the contribute to the discussion of the first report of the Peacebuilding Commission (S/2007/458) for the

second time in two weeks. The prominence that has been given to the report by two principal organs of the United Nations — the Security Council and the General Assembly — is an indication of the significance they attach to the Peacebuilding Commission and its partner, the Peacebuilding Fund.

We were compelled by our own painful experience with conflict to play an active role in the establishment of the Peacebuilding Commission. As Council members know, we had the fortune of becoming one of the two countries for the Commission's first country-specific interventions. Thus, we have witnessed with unflagging interest the birth and growth of the Peacebuilding Commission. The report before us is an account of how that birth and growth took place, of the challenges the Commission has had to conquer and of challenges that are yet to be conquered.

We welcome and appreciate the report. Now we have a torch, in the form of the report, to show us the way into the future. In spite of the Commission's teething problems, most of which were not totally unexpected, all of us should be proud of the achievements of the Peacebuilding Commission during its short period of existence. My delegation would like to thank all those whose efforts put the Commission on the path we envisaged at the conceptual stage, particularly the Commission itself, the first Chairman, the Peacebuilding Support Office and the Chairs of the country-specific configurations.

Let me pay a special tribute to the Chair for Sierra Leone, Ambassador Frank Majoor, for his devotion to Sierra Leone. Of course, we thank the Commission for selecting Sierra Leone as one of the two countries for its initial operation.

In Sierra Leone, as in many other places that have been afflicted with violent and devastating conflict, the road to peace has not been altogether smooth. But with tolerance, understanding and the overriding need to reconcile and move forward for the general good, even the pain, the mud and thorns we have travelled through for peace have been the greatest of healers. Today, we can reflect with pride on the two presidential and parliamentary elections and the one local government election we have had since the war formally ended in 2002. These represent giant strides in our peace and democratization processes and a solid foundation for sustainable peace.

The recent elections, in particular, speak eloquently of our political maturity and determination to achieve lasting stability. Again, we thank the United Nations and all other multilateral and bilateral partners of Sierra Leone for their support.

We are aware that this support comes with the responsibility to make sure that the people of Sierra Leone enjoy, in tangible terms, the benefits of peace, democracy and human rights, and, in particular, the realization of the promise of the Peacebuilding Commission. That is why our new President both in his maiden speech to parliament and during the recent visit of Ambassador Majoor, declared his commitment to the cooperation of his Government with the United Nations in general and with the Peacebuilding Commission in particular.

As a demonstration of our readiness to discharge our responsibility, let me make the following observations and recommendations. First, work on the framework document on cooperation between Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Commission was slowed down by the elections. Now that the elections are over, we should try as expeditiously as possible to conclude it so that this issue does not stand in the way of progress in the implementation of the Sierra Leone programme.

Secondly, country ownership of the Peacebuilding Commission both in principle and in practical terms, should be the foundation for the operations of the Commission.

Thirdly, resource mobilization is one of the responsibilities of the Commission. That should now be brought to the fore of its activities, including, possibly, through a pledging conference with all our partners fully involved. Given very weak — and in some cases non-existent — institutions, owing partly to a scarcity of appropriately trained and experienced personnel, the Peacebuilding Commission may want to consider introducing a scheme for experience transfer to needy countries that are within its purview. The programme, as a critically urgent gap-closer in the recovery process, should be flexible, adaptable and in harmony with those already in place.

Fourthly, in the light of the fluid nature of conflict in the West African subregion, a carefully coordinated regional approach, in particular within the Mano River Union, will be an investment worth considering by the Commission.

Lastly, the institution of a strong monitoring and evaluation mechanism for the programmes in operation should be considered.

The Commission might also consider the question of working relationships among the Commission, the Security Council and the General Assembly, while recognizing their respective responsibilities and functions under the Charter.

We acknowledge that the Commission shall request advice from the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council or the General Assembly. In our view, there is also need for the Commission to start thinking of ways in which it can assist the Security Council by providing relevant advice, for instance in the establishment of new United Nations post-conflict integrated offices, or even in developing peacekeeping mandates.

Since the Commission was established jointly by the General Assembly and the Security Council, perhaps at the end of this first year of the Commission's work the Council itself may wish to come up with general proposals to address some of the challenges outlined in the Commission's report.

In conclusion, let me assure the Security Council that we are prepared and ready to share with the rest of the world what I prefer to call the Sierra Leone experience, in the days of the United Nations Mission in Sierra Leone and now in the days of the United Nations Integrated Office in Sierra Leone and the Peacebuilding Commission. For now, that is perhaps all that we can give to the world for its support. As intangible as what we have to offer may seem at the moment, I am sure that future generations may one day say, yes, our predecessors invested so much for peace and stability in Sierra Leone, but the result of the experiment has made our work easier and saved the world lives and billions of dollars.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of Burundi.

Mr. Ntakirutimana (Burundi) (*spoke in French*): Mr. President, at the outset I wish on behalf of my delegation to extend to you our sincere gratitude for having invited us to this meeting. I wish also to thank the delegation of Angola which courageously, farsightedly and wisely guided the first difficult year of the Peacebuilding Commission.

My delegation also wishes to offer encouragement to the delegation of Japan, which has just taken over the chairmanship of the Commission. Nor can we forget to thank in particular the Norwegian delegation, which has been with us since our country became a beneficiary of the attention of the Commission. We also wish to thank the Peacebuilding Support Office and the delegations of El Salvador and the Netherlands for their work in launching the activities of the Commission and attaining the first milestones.

When the Peacebuilding Commission was created, Burundi was plunged into enormous disarray. Burundi had experienced 40 years of bad governance. It had just experienced more than 10 years of a fratricidal war, of which it bore the scars. There were new institutions that had just been created and which were supposed to be functioning: there was a new general assembly, a new senate, a new army and a new national police, to mention only a few. In a word, the entire country had to be reborn, grow, stabilize and develop.

With the Peacebuilding Commission, we have now come to the end of a year of useful, laborious and good work. Together, over the past year, we have succeeded, as we see it, in holding 4 major gatherings.

First, there was the matter of getting to know Burundi. Several delegations came from Bujumbura to New York to participate in the meetings of the Peacebuilding Commission. Delegations also went from New York to Bujumbura — to the field — to see for themselves the reality of the situation there.

Secondly, there was the identification of priorities and the challenges facing my Government.

Thirdly, there was the development of the Strategic Framework. Today we are in the process of finalizing the follow-up mechanism for the implementation of the Strategic Framework.

Fourthly, for my delegation, there was the organization — the success even — from 24 to 25 May, of the round table of development partners and donors.

Today, my country is facing 3 essential challenges. First, those projects identified by the Commission are currently being implemented. Twelve projects are in the process of becoming operational. It

would be our hope that the Commission would remain focused on the success of these projects. We do not wish to see their failure. We do not want to see them fail to achieve a conclusion.

Secondly, we wish to see complete and final peace on the territory of Burundi. We would hope that the Security Council will firmly and clearly support the efforts of the South African facilitators in the search for final peace in Burundi. The regional initiative put forward by Uganda is doing its best and deserves specific and concrete backing from the Security Council. We should like to reassure the Council that the Government of Burundi has no kind of hidden agenda that might in any way delay or jeopardize the path to peace. The fighters of the Forces nationales de liberation — Parti Libération du Peuple Hutu (FNL-PALIPEHUTU) are our brothers, our neighbours and are people from our own families, and we are ready to welcome them.

The goodwill of the Government of Burundi shows that more than 1,400 deserters from the FNL-PALIPEHUTU movement are now in fact saying that they want to see the implementation of the agreement signed with the leadership of their movement. They are deserting their movement and they are coming to seek protection from Governmental forces. Here I would like to request the Council's support in ensuring that they are fed so as to avoid having them destroy the villages in which they are now gathered.

Thirdly, peace without bread can go nowhere; we also wish to have bread. During the round table in May of 2007 — a successful round table — various budgetary pledges were made by development partners present in Bujumbura. Today, as in the past, Burundi notes with the deepest regret, that few partners have in fact kept their pledges. My delegation would like here to see the Security Council and the Commission get involved in pooling their efforts to ensure that promises become realities.

I would like to suggest four ideas for the improvement of the Commission's future activities.

First, there is the need to consider the principle of national involvement as the cornerstone that must guide all the activities of the Peacebuilding Commission.

Secondly, the Peacebuilding Commission must continue to work in a transparent, flexible and inclusive manner.

Thirdly, the Commission must continue to work in close cooperation with the General Assembly, the Security Council, the Economic and Social Council and the international financial institutions, as well as regional organizations.

Fourthly, dialogue should be continued with all of the interested players: the donor countries, the recipient countries and the United Nations system as a whole.

Burundi's success as it moves toward the final achievement of peace will also be a success for the Security Council and for the Commission. If we succeed, we shall succeed together; if we fail, we will fail together. My Government once again reiterates to the Commission what it has already said often, namely, that we hope to see the Commission and the Security Council one day tell us that we have succeeded in Burundi.

The President: I should like to inform the Council that I have received a letter from the representative of El Salvador, in which she requests to be invited to participate in the discussion of the item on the Council's agenda. In conformity with the usual practice, I propose, with the consent of the Council, to invite that representative to participate in the consideration of the item, without the right to vote, in accordance with the relevant provisions of the Charter and rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure.

There being no objection, it is so decided.

At the invitation of the President, Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) took the seat reserved for her at the side of the Council Chamber.

The President: I now give the floor to the representative of El Salvador.

Mrs. Gallardo Hernández (El Salvador) (*spoke in Spanish*): Allow me to congratulate the President for having convened this open debate in the Security Council on the Peacebuilding Commission report (S/2007/458) and to allow me to participate.

We would like to recognize the leadership of the Permanent Representative of Angola, Ambassador Gaspar Martins, and we welcome the Ambassador from Japan, Mr. Takasu, and assure him of our full support.

A bit more than 1 year has passed now since the Peacebuilding Commission was established within the

process of the reform of the United Nations. Expectations at that time were multiple and different; this was reflected in the initial meetings of the Commission because it was a new body. It meant that member States had to define and agree on the functions, both of the Peacebuilding Support Office, as well as the Peacebuilding Fund committee. We needed to plan strategically and consistently to see how we were to work, including clear monitoring procedures for activities that the Commission was to carry out on the ground.

However, throughout this first year, we have looked at the achievements with optimism, even though we are aware of the multiple challenges that our Commission still faces.

El Salvador's re-election as Vice-Chair of the Peacebuilding Commission and our role as Chair of the Working Group on Lessons Learned mean that, as a country, we are intensely committed to our mission.

Created to fill a gap in the United Nations system and to facilitate the transition of post-conflict processes from peacekeeping to peacebuilding, our Commission, by virtue of its composition, will give added value to the assistance that the United Nations will henceforth have to provide to countries that decide to lay down weapons and settle their disputes through dialogue and agreement, with a view to establishing a national development plan.

Undoubtedly, the presence of donor countries, which in the past few years have contributed economic, technical and financial cooperation in various countries, is complemented by the presence of countries such as El Salvador. Having overcome internal violence, we in those countries wish to help, on the basis of our experiences, to guide possible decisions or recommendations that the Peacebuilding Commission could make in the countries under consideration — currently, Sierra Leone and Burundi.

The first report of the Peacebuilding Commission, submitted at the end of this year (S/2007/458), reflects some progress and achievements, while at the same time indicating necessary tasks that have yet to be carried out, particularly on the ground. Indeed, it is on the ground where the Commission's concrete actions should take place, because that is where the dividends of peace trickle down. In our view, the presence of Commission members on the ground through programme visits is necessary for the analysis and the strategies that the Commission decides upon.

Our challenge is to intensify the coordination and communication between the Commission and the Security Council, including the possibility of presenting to the Council — if the Council desires them — the Commission's opinions on subjects of common interest. We also consider it appropriate to formulate concrete strategies, as we did in the cases of Burundi and Sierra Leone, through the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding, because that is an added value and does not duplicate efforts.

The international community is awaiting a tangible contribution from the Peacebuilding Commission and — why not say it? — some practical recommendations in specific areas and contexts. From that perspective, the Working Group on Lessons Learned, which El Salvador has the honour to chair, has endeavoured to analyse and assemble concrete experiences through various processes so as to accumulate an inventory of lessons learned by the United Nations system and the international community, for when weapons are laid down, there is an imperative need for new coexistence and integration into a shared national development project.

While each peacebuilding process has its own characteristics, and its success certainly depends on the political will of national actors, the implementation of lessons learned should benefit the countries under consideration. Therefore, let us not forget to build a historical memory that will contribute in the future to more effective United Nations participation in peacebuilding activities.

The modality adopted by the Working Group on Lessons Learned — which connects actors on the ground with Commission members through videoconferences — reflects the openness and flexibility that our work should have. Indeed, it is an open Group in which all United Nations Member States are welcome to make a concrete contribution that can benefit the quest for lasting solutions on the ground in the countries under consideration.

On the basis of our experience, we believe that when a country emerges from armed conflict, it is essential to bring the parties together in order to identify short- and medium-term priorities and to act on that basis. At that time, let us not forget, needs are many and national capacity is sometimes limited.

However, there are certain aspects that, if not urgently addressed, can set back and jeopardize political agreements reached by national actors — such as, to mention only a few, opportunities to reintegrate and employ former combatants and young people, and reform of the security sector. Those are among the issues that the Working Group on Lessons Learned has identified and analysed.

From the outset, El Salvador has expressed its firm belief that the Peacebuilding Commission should not be considered just a forum for financial cooperation or a mediator between donors and recipient countries. We believe it is important that Commission members be aware of areas or programmes that are seeking financing through the Peacebuilding Fund. While it is important to listen to national authorities when they identify their priorities, the way in which those priorities are financed — as we have seen in the Working Group on Lessons Learned — can be far more successful if experiences in other processes are taken into account.

The reality of today's world demonstrates that no region is spared from the possibility of conflict. That is why we hope that, in the future, the Peacebuilding Commission will have to take into account a certain geographic balance in terms of the countries under consideration.

Finally, let me add that the inclusion of a country in the Commission's agenda, as well as a country's removal from it, should be agreed with the national authorities. At the same time, the inclusion of new countries should be decided with the input, or at least the knowledge, of the Commission members.

The President: There are no further speakers inscribed on my list. The Security Council has thus concluded the present stage of its consideration of the item on its agenda.

The meeting rose at 12.50 p.m.